

The Sahabah (Radiyallahu anhum) & the Compilation of the Glorious Qur'aan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارَكَ وَ سَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

Praise and Salutations

All praise belongs solely to Allah Ta'ālā who enlightened the path of guidance and salvation for humanity by means of the Qur'ān. May the choicest of salutations, peace and blessings be upon our Messenger Muḥammad (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) who was sent as an embodiment of the constitution of the Qur'ān.

Preserving the Qur'ān: A Divine Promise

Undoubtedly, the Glorious Qur'ān is the most sublime gift of Allah Ta'ālā upon this ummah, the most magnificent miracle of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) and the strongest evidence of the truthfulness of Islam. Allah Ta'ālā Himself shouldered the responsibility to preserve every aspect of the Qur'ān. Allah Ta'ālā emphatically declares,

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

*Verily We have revealed the reminder (Qur'ān) and indeed, We are its preservers.*¹

The first group handpicked for this sacred mission was none other than the illustrious and noble Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) who preserved the Qur'ān by memory and were responsible for gathering and compiling the Qur'ān. Thus, if a person has to doubt them, then he is actually doubting the Qur'ān and the entire Dīn.

Revelation & Preservation of the Qur'ān in the Era of Nubuwwah

The speciality of the Qur'ān is that it was revealed verbally upon Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) over a lengthy period of twenty-three years whereas all other divine scriptures were revealed in the forms of books, slates or written scripts.

When any portion of the Qur'ān would be revealed, Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) would call one of his scribes and dictate to him the words of the Qur'ān. Thereafter, Rasūlullāh

¹ Sūrah al-Ḥijr: 9.

(*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) would command the scribe to read out what had just been dictated and correct any mistakes, if any. Only then would Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) present the Qur’ān to the Ṣaḥābah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*)². They would then memorise the revelation. In this manner, the Qur’ān was preserved both by memory and in writing.

The following Ṣaḥābah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*) were famous as the scribes of revelation: Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Zaid ibn Thābit, Ubay ibn Ka‘b, Mu‘āwiyah, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, Abān ibn Sa‘īd, Thābit ibn Qais (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*).

Among them, Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*) and Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*) were the main two scribes. They would remain before Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) at all times in order to record waḥī and whatever else Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) required of them. They had no work besides this (i.e. they had sacrificed even earning a livelihood in order to remain in the blessed company and to serve Rasūlullāh [*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*]).³

What level of trust and confidence Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) had on them to record the pure waḥī that was revealed by Allah Ta‘ālā via Sayyidunā Jibrīl Amīn (*‘alayhis salaam*) unto Al-Amīn (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*)! Yet, some people have the audacity to doubt the integrity of these esteemed personalities, especially Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*).

They would write the verses on stones, hide, leaves, tree barks, bones, and pieces of paper, which would then be stored away.

Furthermore, every year in the month of Ramaḍān, Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) would recite the revealed portion of the Qur’ān to Sayyidunā Jibrīl (*‘alayhis salaam*). The year wherein Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) passed away, he recited the Qur’ān twice to Sayyidunā Jibrīl (*‘alayhis salaam*).

The Qur’ān was Not Compiled in the Era of Nubuwwah

By the time Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) left this temporary abode, the complete memorisation of the Qur’ān coupled with writing of the Qur’ān had been finished. However, the writings were in the possession of various Ṣaḥābah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*) and not written in one place nor kept together. The Qur’ān had not been compiled in a single book during the era of Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*) due to different reasons.

Ṣaḥābah (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*) were Chosen for Compilation

After the demise of Rasūlullāh (*Ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam*), Allah Ta‘ālā inspired the Rightly Guided Khulafā’ to accomplish this great task of compiling the Qur’ān, honouring His true promise to protect this Glorious Book for this ummah. The beginning of this momentous task was at the hands of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*) through the suggestion and persuasion of Sayyidunā ‘Umar (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*).⁴

² This has been narrated by Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (*Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu*). (*Manāhil al-‘Irfān*, vol. 1 pg. 202.)

³ *Jawāmi‘us Sīrah* pg. 27

⁴ *Al-Itqān*, vol. 1 pg. 164.

قصة امتحان مروان لابي هريرة فيما رواه الحاكم عن أبي الزُّعَيْرَةِ كاتب مروان بن الحكم، أن مروان بن الحكم دعا أبا هريرة فأقعده خلف السرير، وجعل يسأله وجعلت أكتب حتى إذا كان عند رأس الحول، دعا به فأقعده وراء الحجاب فجعل يسأله عن ذلك، فما زاد ولا نقص، ولا قدم ولا آخر " وقد نقل هذه القصة الذهبي في سير أعلام النبلاء، ثم عقب بقوله : "قلت هكذا فليكن الحفظ وهذه القصة نقلها أيضاً ابن حجر في الإصابة، وابن كثير في البداية

Once Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam wanted to test Abū Hurayrah's (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) power of memory. He sat with him in one room and behind a curtain he placed a scribe, unknown to Abū Hurayrah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu), and ordered him to write down whatever Abū Hurayrah said. A year later, Marwān called Abū Hurayrah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) again and asked him to recall the same aḥādīth which the scribe had recorded. It was found that he had forgotten not a single word.

Gathering of the Qur'ānic Texts in the Era of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu)

In 12 A.H., the Battle of Yamāmah took place which held many Ḥuffāẓ in its ranks. 70 of them were martyred in this brutal battle. Sayyidunā 'Umar (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) feared that if such battles continued and Ḥuffāẓ continue being martyred, then portions of the Qur'ān may get lost. Therefore, he advised Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) to compile a copy of the Qur'ān. Initially, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) blankly refused saying,

كَيْفَ تَفْعَلُ شَيْئًا لَمْ يَفْعَلْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

"How can you do something that Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) did not do?"

Subḥānallāh! What level of obedience and commitment to the ways of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam)!

Sayyidunā 'Umar (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) continued to explain the benefits of compiling the Qur'ān to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) until he also felt the need for it. He thus called for Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) as he had memorised the entire Qur'ān during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) and was the main scribe of revelation. More significantly, he was present at the time of the final revision of the Qur'ān that Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) had done with Jibrīl ('alayhis salaam) in Ramaḍān 10 A.H.

Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) then explained to Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) what had transpired between him and Sayyidunā 'Umar (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) also initially refused by saying, "How can you do something that Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) did not do?" He also mentioned,

فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْ كَلَّفُونِي نَقْلَ جَبَلٍ مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ مَا كَانَ أَثْقَلَ عَلَيَّ مِمَّا أَمَرَنِي بِهِ مِنْ جَمْعِ الْقُرْآنِ

"By Allah! If they had asked me to move a mountain, it would have not been more difficult for me than the task of compiling the Qur'ān that he had placed upon me."

Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) continued to explain its benefits to Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) until he also understood the need.

Despite being a Ḥāfiẓ of the Qur'ān and a scribe of revelation, Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) did not individually take up this mammoth task. He gathered the Qur'ān with the help of the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) relying on two resources, what the

hearts of the Huffāz retained and what was written during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam).

He was extremely rigorous in authenticating such, till he was convinced without a shred of doubt that it had been written in front of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) together with it being from the final recitation of the Messenger (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) and none of the recital of such had been abrogated. He would therefore not accept any portion without the testimony of two just men providing proof that it had been written in the presence of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam).⁵

The Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) were all in favour of and assisted in this compilation of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). In fact, Sayyidunā 'Alī (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) states,

أَعْظَمُ النَّاسِ فِي الْمَصَاحِفِ أَجْرًا أَبُو بَكْرٍ، رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ، هُوَ أَوَّلُ مَنْ جَمَعَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ

“The one to receive the most reward in the compilation will be Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). May Allah Ta'ālā have mercy on Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu), he was the first to gather the Book of Allah.”⁶

This is the manner in which Sayyidunā 'Alī (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) appreciated the service that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) rendered to the ummah regarding the compilation of the Qur'ān. On the other hand, there are people who claim to love Sayyidunā 'Alī (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu), yet hurl the worst types of abuse on Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu)!

This copy was first in the care of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). After his demise, it went into the care of Sayyidunā 'Umar (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). After his passing, it went into the care of Sayyidah Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhuma).⁷ This was used as an original by Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) in writing the other copies during the second compilation in the era of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu).⁸

Writing of the Qur'ān in the Era of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu)

By this time, Islam had already spread far and wide. As the Muslim armies conquered new lands, more and more people entered the fold of Islam. The Huffāz in these armies would teach the new Muslims the Qur'ān. However, since the Qur'ān has been revealed in different qirā'āt, the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) taught the people according to the qirā'āt they knew. The result was that different qirā'āt were used in different areas.

When Muslims from one area heard the recitation of those from another area, having no knowledge of the Qur'ān being revealed in different qirā'āt, they started quarrelling as to whose Qur'ān was correct and whose was not.

In the Battles of Azerbaijan and Armenia in 25 A.H., Sayyidunā Ḥuḍayfah ibn al-Yamān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) took note of the growing difference amongst the masses in their modes of recitation, together with their disputes and disparagement. He carried his observations and concerns to Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) and pleaded to him to intervene.

⁵ Their intent was that nothing should be written except from that which was written in the presence of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) and not just from memory.

⁶ Al-Itqān, vol. 1, pg. 165; Mabāḥith 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, pg. 128; Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf, pg. 50.

⁷ Most of the details of this compilation appear in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī #4986.

⁸ Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf, pg. 50.

Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) realised that if the evil side of this division is not quelled with tact, it will lead to a disastrous end. He pondered over the solution and gathered the well versed and great Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum). They looked into this issue and agreed that the best way forward would be to prepare copies of the Qur'ān based on the principle copy of Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) which had been gathered during the era of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) and send these copies to the different cities. These copies will serve as a concrete answer to their differences and a resolve to their disputes, since they will be written in a manner that will incorporate and include the various qirā'āt.

Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) deputed Sayyidunā Zaid ibn Thābit (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) and three other Ṣaḥābah; 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr, Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ, and 'Abdur Raḥmān ibn Ḥarith ibn Hishām (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) to compile the Qur'ān such that no quarrel would remain.

This time he wrote the Qur'ān in one book and gave sequence to the Sūrahs as well. Thus, the first ever complete and sequenced Qur'ān was compiled under the auspices of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) and with the approval of the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum). What a great service for the ummah indeed!

When they completed the copying of the Qur'ān in the above-mentioned manner, Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) sent the copies to the different cities of the Muslim empire including Makkah, Shām, Baṣrah, and Kūfah.⁹

Consensus of the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum)

Sayyidunā 'Alī (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) says: "Do not speak with regards to Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) except that which is good. His act of copying the manuscripts was through our consensus. He said to us, 'I hear men speaking of these modes of recitation, citing theirs as better than others? This statement can lead one to disbelief!' We asked him, 'What solution do you devise?' He said, 'Gather the people on one manuscript thereby quelling the disagreements and differences.' We applauded his opinion."¹⁰

Dependence on the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum)

From what has been mentioned, we come to understand that the Qur'ān went through three stages. Firstly, writing of it in the era of Rasūlullāh (Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam). Secondly, its gathering in the era of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). And thirdly, being copied in the era of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhu).

However, in all of these stages, it was the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) that had greatly contributed to the compilation of the Qur'ān. Thus we are entirely indebted to them for the Qur'ān that we have in our hands today and for the other various details of Dīn that they had passed on to the ummah.

⁹ Some details of this compilation appear in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* #4987.

¹⁰ *Al-Itqān*, vol. 1 pg. 179; *Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf*, pg. 69.

The great scholar, 'Allāmah Dhahabī (Raḥimahullāhu) so beautifully and eloquently explains this in the following words:

وَلَوْلَاهُمْ مَا وَصَلَ إِلَيْنَا مِنَ الدِّينِ أَصْلٌ وَلَا فَرْعٌ، وَلَا عَلِمْنَا مِنَ الْفَرَائِضِ وَالسُّنَنِ سُنَّةً وَلَا فَرَضًا، وَلَا عَلِمْنَا مِنَ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَالْأَخْبَارِ شَيْئًا... وَلَا تَهُمُّ أَرْضَى الْوَسَائِلِ مِنَ الْمَأْثُورِ وَالْوَسَائِلِ مِنَ الْمُتَقُولِ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْوَسَائِلِ طَعْنٌ فِي الْأَصْلِ، وَالْإِزْدِرَاءُ بِالنَّاقِلِ إِزْدِرَاءٌ بِالْمُنْقُولِ.

"If it was not for the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum), no principle issue nor secondary aspect of Dīn would have reached us and we would have not known any obligatory or sunnah practice. Similarly, we would have not known any ḥadīth or tradition...

*For they were the best mediums and links for the reports and traditions. Finding fault in the medium is tantamount to finding a fault in the original and discrediting the reporter automatically discredits the report."*¹¹

This could be easily understood from a simple example. If someone wishes to demolish the entire ground floor of a sky scraper and leave the rest of the building standing as is. Is this possible? It's obvious that once the ground floor is demolished, the entire building will come down crumbling. This is exactly the situation with our Dīn. The entire structure of Dīn rests on the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) as it was they who had compiled the Qur'ān and passed on the aḥādīth to us. Once we doubt them, our entire Dīn is weakened and discredited.

Hence, we need to have the highest regard and respect for the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiyallāhu 'anhum) for all that they have done for us and have a very deep appreciation for the services that they had rendered in preserving and passing on Dīn.

فَيَا وَيْلَ مَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ أَوْ سَبَّهُمْ أَوْ أَبْغَضَ أَوْ سَبَّ بَعْضَهُمْ، وَلَا سِيَّ سَيِّدِ الصَّحَابَةِ بَعْدَ الرَّسُولِ وَخَيْرُهُمْ وَأَفْضَلُهُمْ أَعْنِي الصِّدِّيقَ الْأَكْبَرَ وَالْخَلِيفَةَ الْأَعْظَمَ أَبَا بَكْرٍ بَنَ أَبِي قُحَافَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، فَإِنَّ الطَّائِفَةَ الْمُخْذُولَةَ مِنَ الرَّافِضَةِ يُعَادُونَ أَفْضَلَ الصَّحَابَةِ وَيُبْغِضُونَهُمْ وَيَسُبُّونَهُمْ. عِيَاذًا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ. وَهَذَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنَّ عُقُوبَهُمْ مَعْكَوسَةٌ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ مَنكُوسَةٌ، فَأَيْنَ هَؤُلَاءِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ بِالْقُرْآنِ إِذْ يُسَبُّونَ مَنْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ؟ وَأَمَّا أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَتَرَضُّونَ عَمَّنْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَيَسُبُّونَ مَنْ سَبَّهَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَيُؤَالُونَ مَنْ يُؤَالِي اللَّهَ وَيُعَادُونَ مَنْ يُعَادِي اللَّهَ وَهُمْ مَتَّبِعُونَ لَا مُبْتَدِعُونَ وَيَقْتَدُونَ وَلَا يَتَدْتُونَ، وَلِهَذَا هُمْ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ الْمُفْلِحُونَ وَعِبَادَةُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Therefore, woe to those who dislike or curse them, or dislike or curse any of them, especially the master after the Messenger, the best and most righteous among them, the Ṣiddīq (the great truthful one) and the grand Khalīfah, Abu Bakr bin Abī Quḥāfah, may Allah be pleased with him. The betraying group, the Rāfiḍah (a sect of Shiites), are the enemies of the best Companions, they hate and curse them, we seek refuge with Allah from such evil. This indicates that the minds of these people are twisted and their hearts turned upside down, for where are they in relation to believing in the Qur'an They curse those whom Allah stated He is pleased with! As for the followers of the Sunnah, they are pleased with those whom Allah is pleased with, curse whomever Allah and His Messenger curse, and give their loyalty to Allah's friends and show enmity to the enemies of Allah. They are followers not innovators, imitating the Sunnah they do not initiate it on their own. They are indeed the party of Allah, the successful, and Allah's faithful servants.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

¹¹ Kitāb al-Kabā'ir, pg. 237.